



News Statement

U.S. Department of Labor | Jan. 20, 2016

Three coal mining deaths in 19 days are ‘troubling,’ says MSHA chief

ARLINGTON, Va. – [Assistant Secretary of Labor for Mine Safety and Health Joseph A. Main](#) today issued the following statement regarding the first three coal mining deaths of 2016:

“In just the first three weeks of 2016, and after the safest year in mining history, the coal industry has experienced three fatalities in three separate mining accidents, the highest number of coal accidents to occur in the same time period since January 2006.

- On [Jan. 4](#), a 53-year-old miner was killed when he became entangled in a moving underground conveyer in West Virginia.
- On [Jan. 16](#), a 31-year-old miner was killed when falling material pinned the victim to the mine floor in Pennsylvania.
- On [Jan. 19](#), a 36-year-old miner was killed when he became pinned between a continuous mining machine and a coal rib in Kentucky.

“In light of declining coal market conditions, we all need to be mindful that effective safety and health protections that safeguard our nation’s coal miners need to be in place every day at every mine in the country.

“All miners deserve to work their shifts and return home at the end of the day, safe and healthy. To that end, the [Mine Safety and Health Administration](#) plans to ramp up its targeted enforcement, education and outreach efforts to respond to the troubling number of mining fatalities that have occurred so far this year. Today, MSHA widely disseminated to industry stakeholders [an alert on these deaths](#), emphasizing the need for continued vigilance in miner safety and health.”

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